

# PLEASE READ



The only sure thing in life is change. We've tried to be as up-to-date as possible, but places change owners, hours and menus as often as they open up a new location or go out of business. Call ahead so you don't end up wasting a tank of gas crossing town and arrive after closing time.



Every place in *Hungry?* is recommended, for something. Each reviewer has tried to be honest about his/her experience of the place, and sometimes a jab or two makes its way into the mix. If your favorite spot is slammed for something you think is unfair, it's just one person's opinion! And remember, under the Fair Use Doctrine, some statements about the establishments in this book are intended to be humorous as parodies. Whew! Got the legal stuff out of the way.



While we list over 500 eateries in the book, that's just the beginning of cheap and delicious eats in LA. Visit [hungrycity.com](http://hungrycity.com) for hundreds of more reviews, updates, and all the information you need for your next eating adventures.



If you can't afford to tip you can't afford to eat. In the United States, most servers make minimum wage or less, and depend on tips to pay the rent. Tip fairly, and not only will you get better service when you come back, but you'll start believing in karma (if you don't already).



Too busy to go out? Or too tired? Many of the eateries offer take out or delivery in the local area. Call ahead—this is when the fax number comes in handy.



Know about a place we missed? Willing to divulge your secrets? Send your ideas for the next edition to "Hungry? Los Angeles Update" c/o Glove Box Guides, P.O. Box 861302, Los Angeles, CA 90013 or e-mail [update@hungrycity.com](mailto:update@hungrycity.com). There's no guarantee we'll use your idea, but if it sounds right for us we'll let you know.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Hungry? Manifesto

And then your stomach growls. You may be on the freeway, in an unfamiliar part of our megalopolis, ready to resort to another bland McSomething. Stop right there. There is an endless amount of diversity here. Spread out, yes (at 4,752 square miles, one could fit over 150 Manhattans inside Los Angeles County limits), but get out and explore it. It's possible to live here your whole life and still hardly know this city—but now you'll have no excuse. Once you scratch beneath our often smoggy and glittering surface, you'll find the real food of *Hungry? Los Angeles*.

Our criteria:

## Quality and Value

A good, usually surprisingly good, meal for \$10 or less. A few exceptions for a fabulous tiki atmosphere, or martinis at one of Faulkner's old haunts, but even then there are no \$25 tamales here. When you get your meal at a real *Hungry?* joint, you can't believe they didn't charge you more.

## Character

*Hungry?* focuses on independently owned mom-and-pops, and usually some small chains, often still family-owned and very successful. From French dips at Cole's P.E. Buffet, a time capsule of turn of the century LA to a retro-meal at Googie-style Pann's. Or discount romance that does not feel cheap. Like finding religion, or just a vintage album in the bargain bin, there's a thrill in finding a great place to call your own.

## Adventure

Explore new cuisines or new neighborhoods, or both. A fifth of all foreign-born people in the U.S. live in Southern California, and many have started small places to make the food that reminds them of home. The portions are good, the prices cheap, and the dishes authentic. If it catches on, gourmet restaurants will halve the portions and double the price. And LA is home to migrants from all over the United States, who bring regional cooking with them. New to ceviche, *injera*, Philly cheesesteaks, *bul go gi*, bangers and mash, hush puppies, or *yakisoba*? *Hungry?* takes you to the source.

The Glove Box Guides are called that for a reason—keep them in your car and next time you end up in a neighborhood you don't know, skip the chains and try something new.

#### Democracy

By the People, for the People. The *Hungry?* contributors are LA locals and natives—writers, artists, students, accountants, and more—who love to eat and have chosen to really live in this city and explore it. They're confident in their opinions and tastes (no numeric rating systems here), and these are the secret places they go back to again and again. Joints that aren't just backdrops for the beautiful people to preen. *Hungry?* is not solely a guidebook for the well-heeled—it's for everyone. Visitors will find themselves eating like natives.

Many years of eating by over 80 *Hungry?* contributors have resulted in this book. The second edition of *Hungry?* contains over 275 new entries, and every entry has been revised and expanded. With such a wealth of good eating in LA, we could not fit it all into one book. [Hungrycity.com](http://Hungrycity.com) is an ever-growing database of eateries in LA and soon major cities across the U.S. Never again will you just have to resort to the same old chain restaurant when you're on the road. You can try the hole-in-the-walls of the world with confidence.

—Kristin L. Petersen  
Los Angeles

LA LA—  
GO EAST

**Lyle's Pine Manor**

"This ain't Burger King: you can get it my way or you don't get the son of a bitch at all."

Since 1972

\$\$

1275 Evergreen St., Wrightwood 92397

(at corner of Park St.)

Phone (760) 249-6393



- CATEGORY** Coffee Shop
- HOURS** Daily: 6:30 AM–9 PM  
(Raccoon Saloon open until 2 AM)
- PARKING** Street
- PAYMENT** Cash only
- POPULAR FOOD** Classic Americana grub—French toast is good and thick, eggs and omelettes with hash browns, Raccoon Burger with two patties on grilled sourdough, Mountain Burger with bacon and cheese
- DRINKS** Coffee, hot chocolate, juice, floats; full bar from the Raccoon Saloon next door
- SEATING** Seven booths for four, three bolted tables for four, eight seats at the counter
- AMBIENCE** Last remodeled in the Carter era with oil paintings by local artists of raccoons, pine trees, Joshua trees, and other pastoral high desert/mountain scenes; Wrightwood locals and LA snow bunnies on weekends
- EXTRAS/NOTES** There is one main drag in Wrightwood, and you can count the restaurants in town on one hand (the Mc Donald's down the highway makes six). The most reliable, old-school breakfast can be had at Lyle's. Such conversations take place as: "Hey, someone own that big white SUV with the headlights on?" A worried city boy stands up. "Naw, Earl just knocked them out for ya." City kids lookin' for a rumble proceed with care to the Raccoon Saloon. Check out the Midnight Road Kill Café menu on your way out.

—Kristin L. Petersen

**The Original Bun Boy Restaurant**

Classic coffee shop next to the world's tallest thermometer.

Since 1926

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72155 Baker Blvd., Baker 92309

(off Interstate 15, between LA and Vegas)

Phone (760) 733-4660 • Fax (760) 733-4660

www.bunboybaker.com



- CATEGORY** Coffee Shop
- HOURS** Daily: 6 AM–11 PM
- PARKING** Plenty—got a bus? We got room! 18-

wheeler? Hell, park out back, son!

- PAYMENT**
- POPULAR FOOD** Large menu with breakfast served all day, Bun Boy Burgers, sandwiches, salads, and all strawberry items on the "Strawberry Fields Forever" page of the menu
- DRINKS** Beer, wine, big on daiquiris and strawberry margaritas (sweet!)
- SEATING** Counter with nine seats looks just like on TV's *Alice*, booths and tables
- AMBIENCE** Hungry travelers needing a pit stop from the gambling junket; desert chic circa 1986 *Miami Vice*—lotsa pink and white; not as many gay men as you'd expect with a name like Bun Boy
- EXTRAS/NOTES** Way cool gift shop with plenty of Bun Boy logo paraphernalia! Worth the stop, even if ya don't eat. Cactus daiquiri glasses, anyone? Bun Boy logo caps. The restaurant is next to "The World's Tallest Thermometer" (134 ft. tall, symbolic of the highest temperature ever recorded in the US at nearby Death Valley in 1913). Bun Boy gift certificates! Bun Boy Motel! Baker history display in the lobby—my, how it has grown (I remember when Baker was little). I visit as often as possible. Sadly, Bun Boy is no longer open 24/7.

—Garret Scullin (aka Bun Boy)

**The Pines Café**

A fixture on the Pearblossom Highway.

Since 1954

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4343 Pearblossom Hwy., Palmdale 93552

(at 43rd St. East)

Phone (661) 285-0455



- CATEGORY** Historic Coffee Shop
- HOURS** Thurs–Mon: 7 AM–2 PM
- PARKING** Small lot in front; more parking on side
- PAYMENT** Cash only
- POPULAR FOOD** Quality breakfasts: three-egg omelettes stuffed full; biscuits and gravy; the cook's special meat loaf and eggs; lunch is served here, but most folks order breakfast
- DRINKS** Good coffee, fresh-squeezed orange juice, soft drinks in cans
- SEATING** Tiny place: four tables, six seats at counter, a couple of outdoor seats to sit at while you wait for your table
- AMBIENCE** Looks like a converted cabin from the '20s; really nice servers make you feel right at home in this largely local spot (yep, they do call you "darlin'")
- EXTRAS/NOTES** Portions are generous—plan on taking some home for tomorrow. They're not fond of LA out in these parts, so make a



- SEATING** Two rooms with 18 tables; outdoor patio available for overflow on busy nights
- AUDIENCE** Fashioned to look like a quaint hut; local Korean families and other folks who enjoy good Korean food!

## MIRACLE MILE • FAIRFAX DISTRICT

**Benito's Taco Shop**

Taqueria (see p. 94)

**Canter's**

Everyone knows about Canter's, even  
our parents, even your  
grandparents.

Since 1931

Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles 90036

Beverly Blvd. and Melrose Ave.)

(323) 651-2030 • Fax (323) 651-4835

**CATEGORY** Historic Jewish Deli/Coffee Shop**HOURS** 24/7

**PARKING** Crowded lot (free for 1 1/2 hours), or find a street spot in the notoriously crowded Fairfax District and walk

**PAYMENT**

**POPULAR FOOD** Canter's Fairfax sandwich (1/2 lb. of pastrami and corned beef); Brooklyn Ave. (corned beef or pastrami on rye with Russian dressing); chicken matzo ball soup and matzo brie for breakfast round out their matzo fare

**DRINKS** Thanksgiving Dinner Everyday (fresh roasted turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, and cranberry sauce)

**SEATING** Coffee, soft drinks, and full bar in the Kibbitz Room (open 10 AM–1:45 AM)

**AUDIENCE** Plenty of booths, tables, and seats at counter in two large dining rooms

**SEATING** Fairfax locals of all ages; youngsters late at night catching a bite after clubs; screenwriters and Hollywood hopefuls

**SEATING NOTES** In 1931, Canter's moved from Jersey City, NJ to Boyle Heights in Los Angeles, and then moved to the Fairfax District in 1948. The Kibbitz Room cocktail lounge opened in 1962 (where many fledgling rockers once played, including Jakob Dylan of The Wallflowers). Bakery and deli counter so you can take pickles, a fish platter, or borscht home. Nice people watching after clubs close.

—Kristin L. Petersen

**The Farmers Market:  
"Meet Me at Third  
and Fairfax."  
Since 1934.**

Everyone goes to the Farmers Market—tourists from Diamond Bar to Ohio, old timers who've been haunting the East Patio for years, hipsters and aspiring actors talking shop on the West Patio, and ex-beautiful people who stopped caring about "making it" long ago.

Hit **Bob's Coffee & Doughnuts** for the morning ritual of a freshly-made donut—get the glazed cinnamon roll or nut covered donut. Order a large coffee in a ceramic mug—it's accompanied by a special "hottle" (you'll see). The standard drip coffee, a throwback to pre-Starbucks days, made an Italian friend comment: "They serve me brown water and try to call it coffee?" A trendier brunch awaits you at **Kokomo**, on the south side. Unlike the rest of the market, there is table service, which can be surly, but the breakfasts are reliable. When you want the classic Americana experience, eat French toast at **Du-par's**. Have a crepe for lunch at **La Opera**—try the avocado, egg, Swiss cheese, and onion combo. **The Gumbo Pot** serves catfish po' boys with pink remoulade sauce and thin slices of lemon inside the sandwich, and the New Orleans-style donuts called *beignets*.

The Farmers Market is a community of strangers who have become regulars—one of the few public places in LA where people tend to notice each other, and even say hello. The communal tables are catalysts for human interaction: Bring a game of Scrabble and someone at a nearby seat will ask if he can play. A New Age quack might ask you if you're new in town. Play along and he'll invite you to his "private yoga sessions" on Melrose—don't be silly and take him seriously. This can't be the only place with characters in LA, but it's one of the few where you'll share the same bench.

On a lazy Saturday afternoon with friends, grab a pitcher of beer from either **326 Beer & Wine** near the East Patio, or **E.B.'s Beer & Wine** at the West Patio. Maybe you'll see someone legitimately famous—friends have spotted Alice Cooper, Tommy Lee, Fiona Apple, and Diane Keaton. Your Midwest-cousin would be impressed. Or maybe you'll recognize an *A-Team* guest star in this Mecca of B actors. But who cares? Pay attention to the regulars. Get the nerve up to talk to your fellow Angelenos. And relax. Sunny days at the Market make LA seem to live up to its promise as a constantly changing city of possibilities.

6333 W. Third St. (at Fairfax Ave.), Los Angeles,  
(323) 933-9211 [www.farmersmarketla.com](http://www.farmersmarketla.com)

—Kristin L. Petersen

# Molly Malone's Irish Pub



Is it or not quite in LA anymore...it could be Boston or Chicago...or almost even Ireland.

Since 1970

575 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles 90036

(Just north of Sixth St.)

Phone (323) 935-1577

www.mollymalonesla.com

**CATEGORY** Irish Pub/Live Music

**HOURS** Daily: 11 AM-2 AM

**PARKING** Street (good luck—blocks of Sixth St. are residential permit parking only)

**PAYMENT** VISA M C A E D

**POPULAR DRINKS** Guinness, Harp, Newcastle, and Bass on tap; Jameson's Irish Whiskey; Blacktuoru cider; Irish coffee

**FOOD** Pub faire served at lunch Mon-Fri 11 am-3 pm, and late night food menu Thurs-Sat nights

**SEATING** Long and narrow bar with tables against the wall on one side

**AMBIENCE** Dark wood paneled walls, quaint portraits of prominent Irishmen on the walls, Guinness signs, Irish paraphernalia

**STREET NOTES** Legend has it that the pub at this location, 575 Fairfax, was one of the first bars in LA to be licensed after prohibition. What is known is that the same Irish family has operated Molly's Malone's for over 32 years. Bands play almost every night (cover charge \$3-5) after 9 pm, which can be loud and overwhelming in the tiny space if hearing that particular band was not your primary objective for the evening. Go earlier in the day or evening for a quieter, mellow atmosphere. Hours vary for the import shop, which sells "gifts and sundries from the Mother Country." If you live within walking distance (Park La Brea and Miracle Mile), Molly Malone's might live up to its reputation as a great neighborhood pub.

—Kristin L. Petersen

"The freeway experience ... is the only secular communion Los Angeles has. ...

Actual participation requires a total surrender, a concentration so intense

seem a kind of narcosis, a rapture-of-the-freeway.

The mind goes clean. The rhythm takes over."

—Joan Didion

## BOBA Craze—Love Those Chewy Balls!

Everyone across Los Angeles is drinking boba now. Taste it and believe it. Within the past couple of years this trend has shifted away from the stereotypical "Asian FOB" in Chinatown and Monterey Park towards ... pop culture, you say? Boba is its own drink genre now—a new chewy way for people to enjoy classic teas and juices. Originally an addition to flavored tea, boba is now popular in juices, slushes, and milk shakes. Still clueless? Look for drinks in clear cups that are partially filled with round black (sometimes white or clear) marbles, also known as tapioca pearls, that are slurped with fat colorful straws (manufacturers seem to only sell these jumbo straws in bright orange, pink, green, blue and purple, and rarely clear). You'll know the drink when you see it!

The boba drink originated in Taiwan in the early 80's by an innovative fellow called Liu Han-Chieh who used the starch from the bitter-cassava plant to enhance cold teas. Tapioca pellets are formed by heating the mixture of cassava starch, water, caramel, brown sugar and sweet potato and then running the mixture through sieves. The appearance of the firm but chewy tapioca pearls inspired the name "Bubble Tea" and of course "boba," a Chinese slang for "breasts." You get the idea. Other popular names include boba drink, pearl tea drink, bo ba nai cha, zhen zhu nai cha, tapioca drink, and bubble tea. Know these differences so you won't be surprised at the selections!

**Boba Milk Tea:** most traditional boba drink. Tea + milk + tapioca balls. Same as tapioca milk tea, bo ba nai cha, and zhen zhu nai cha.

**Boba Tea:** any other flavored tea with boba.

**Snow Bubble:** a milky slush with boba. Not milky like a milkshake, and not exactly slushy either.

**Slush:** slush. Mostly fruit flavors. (Mango, Apple, Lychee, mostly)

Forget trying to make it yourself! Homemade boba is complex, time-consuming, and not exactly as cost-efficient as you'd hope. You can easily satisfy your boba cravings at cheap chains all over Los Angeles.

**TenRen's Tea Time** ([www.tenrens.com](http://www.tenrens.com))

**Tapioca Express** ([www.tapiocaexpress.ws](http://www.tapiocaexpress.ws))

**Lollicup** ([www.lollicup.com](http://www.lollicup.com))

**Relaxation** ([www.relaxtation.com](http://www.relaxtation.com))

**Boba World** ([www.bobaworld.com](http://www.bobaworld.com))

**Life Plaza** ([www.life-plaza.com](http://www.life-plaza.com))

—Jessica Weng

"Be wary of strong drink. It can make you shoot at tax collectors... and miss."

—Robert Heinlein



at Salvation Army. Not polished. This is not about looking cool—this is about sitting for hours and getting work done. Local artwork on walls. Bookcase of books to borrow in case you forgot your own. Welcoming, friendly staff.

### The Colorado

*The perfect dive bar--a meat market without any meat.*

SS

2640 East Colorado Blvd., Pasadena 91107

(at San Gabriel Blvd.)

Phone (626) 449-3485



**CATEGORY** Neighborhood Bar

**HOURS** Daily: 10 AM–2 AM

**PARKING** Lot in back, street

**PAYMENT**  

**POPULAR DRINKS** Beer, kamikaze; Guinness, Bass, Boddingtons. Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Sam Adams, and Newcastle on-tap

**UNIQUE DRINKS** Dare you to order the Hot Sex, Purple Hooter, or Watermelon

**FOOD** None—they even get grumpy when you ask for coffee—they don't want to turn on the machine

**SEATING** A few booths and tables, long bar area in the corner

**AMBIENCE** Kids too cool and too poor for Old Town; the johns from east Colorado's "Hookers Row;" artsy boys born in the 1970s with sideburns sit in the same bar with older men who haven't shaved their sideburns since the 1970s

**EXTRAS/NOTES** If you grew up in Pasadena, even if you don't want to admit it, you've been to the Colorado. Art Center kids and the Stone Temple Pilots made it a "cool dive bar" (Scott Weiland got busted buying heroin in a motel down the street). Peeling red velvet wall paper, well worn gray carpet. Cheesy beer signs make it look like your drunken uncle's rec room, complete with two pool tables (\$1 a game). Trophy cases on wall include a jackalope head—a real stuffed rabbit with antlers. Before you think you've found paradise and drive home in bliss, walk across the street to Denny's to sober up some.

—Kristin L. Petersen

SAN  
GABRIEL  
VALLEY

## Nova Express

Galactica had a



840 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles 90036

(at Oakwood, between Beverly Blvd. and Melrose Ave.)

Phone (323) 658-7533

www.novaexpresscafe.com

**CATEGORY** Theme Café

**HOURS** Daily: 7 PM–4 AM

**PARKING** A bitch—park on the street but read the signs

**PAYMENT** Cash only

**POPULAR DRINKS** Strawberry-banana smoothie, full espresso bar (lattes are popular), shakes, and Italian sodas; beer and wine served until midnight

**FOOD** Intergalactic theme extends to more than the decor: celestial salads, earthling sandwiches, cosmic pizzas

**SEATING** Seating for up to 50; ranges from café tables to captain's chairs to amoeba-like tables for two near front windows; tables outside and a bench for smokers

**AMBIENCE** Black lights, candles, retro-futuristic lamps; cases displaying collection of action figures to delight the mid-twentysomething hipster clientele with Tomorrowland nostalgia overload

**EXTRAS/NOTES** Interplanetary fantasy place to go eat that is kind on your post-club zombie face. DJs spin most weeknights after 11 pm. Nova Express T-shirts for sale. Happy hour 6–8:30 pm.

—Stephanie Ei-Mei Schwartz & Michael M. Toji

## Tom Bergin's Tavern

The House of Irish Coffee," and a home

for the neighborhood to while the hours away.

Since 1936

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840 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles 90036

(south of Wilshire Blvd., at Eighth St.)

Phone (323) 936-7151

**CATEGORY** Irish Tavern

**HOURS** Daily: noon–2 AM

**PARKING** Valet, or search for a street spot (metered until 6 pm)

**PAYMENT**

**POPULAR DRINKS** Guinness and Harp on tap, plus a full bar

**UNIQUE DRINKS** You guessed it, Irish coffee

**FOOD** Fish 'n' chips are a reliable, tasty complement



to your pint of Guinness; full menu of Irish and American food

**SEATING** Sprawling wood horseshoe-shaped bar and three choice booths in front, plus larger dining area with tables and a fireplace in the back room

**AMBIENCE** Walls and ceilings are covered with shamrocks with customer names, a testament to years of loyal drinking by the regulars; dark wood paneling and green vinyl booth; mixed crowd ranges in ages from twenty something to retirees, depending on time of day

**EXTRAS/NOTES** Longtime waiters and bartenders manage to create a genuine Cheers-like atmosphere. TVs in bar to catch a game, though that rarely dominates the vibe.

—Kristin L. Petersen

## What's Brewing

A multi-genre extravaganza--come soon, before it explodes!



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5001 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles 90039

(at Highland Ave.)

Phone (323) 954-WHAT

**CATEGORY** Coffeehouse

**HOURS** Mon-Fri: 6:30 AM–7:30 PM

Sat/Sun: 8 AM–6 PM

**PARKING** Plenty in the minimall lot

**PAYMENT** Cash only

**POPULAR DRINKS** All the coffee variants, fruit smoothies

**UNIQUE DRINKS** Yep, they've got 'em all

**FOOD** Salads, sandwiches, pastries, ice cream

**SEATING** A few tables—not comfortable to hang out in for longer than 20 minutes or so

**AMBIENCE** Locals, business people; less ethnically diverse clientele than Starbucks across the street; music better than it should be when a certain cute guy on staff is working

**EXTRAS/NOTES** You know those stores that start out specializing in, say, school supplies, but branch out into pet food and then lawn care? What's Brewing is working on that model—one jam-packed room with the full assortment of coffee drinks along with cafe food along with Bud's Ice Cream along with Noah's Bagels along with (rather good) fresh fruit shakes along with all the coffee gifties along with the full product lines of Tazo, Panache Gourmet Cocoa, The Republic of Tea, and Frito Lay(!) along with several types of candy and cookies (including those small ones on racks you only see at old-fashioned bakeries).

—Jeff Solomon